

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☐ Elementary ☐ Middle ☒ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other  
☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☒ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Mr. Edward Canzanese

Official School Name: Rosa International Middle School

School Mailing Address:  
485 Browning Lane  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003-3160

County: Camden State School Code Number\*: 07-0800-074

Telephone: (856) 616-8787 Fax: (856) 616-0904

Web site/URL: http://rosaweb.chclc.org/ E-mail: ecanzanese@chclc.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. David Campbell

District Name: Cherry Hill Township School District Tel: (856) 429-5600

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Ms. Sharon Giaccio

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**All data are the most recent year available.**

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- |           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 12        | Elementary schools  |
| 3         | Middle schools      |
| 0         | Junior high schools |
| 3         | High schools        |
| 1         | Other               |
| <b>19</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>        |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 11821

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 12567

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☒ Suburban  
☐ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural

4. 7 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

     If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	7	106	132	238
K			0	8	114	132	246
1			0	9			0
2			0	10			0
3			0	11			0
4			0	12			0
5			0	Other			0
6	164	132	296				
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							<b>780</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
16 % Asian  
6 % Black or African American  
5 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
72 % White  
1 % Two or more races  
**100** % **Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 2 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	10
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	5
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	15
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	780
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.019
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1.923

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 25

Specify languages:

Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Cantonese, English, Farsi, Filipino, Flemish, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi/Hindustani, Japanese, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Portuguese, Punjabi, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Tagalog, Telugu, Urdu, Vietnamese

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 47

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

Total Number of Students Served: 83

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>7</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>20</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>43</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>52</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>15</u>	<u>6</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>84</u>	<u>6</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 15 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	96%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	96%	97%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	4%	3%	6%	7%	0%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	<u>0</u>	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u>	%
Found employment	<u>0</u>	%
Military service	<u>0</u>	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u>	%
Unknown	<u>0</u>	%
<b>Total</b>	<u><b>100</b></u>	%

## PART III - SUMMARY

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At Rosa International Middle School, our professional learning community is committed to the mission of teaching all children to love learning, exceed expectations and contribute to the global community. We are committed to the ideal that all children can learn, which is the hallmark of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. That ideal is also reflected in our district's five Board of Education Goals for 2008-2009:

1. Continue to improve student achievement at all grade levels and close achievement gaps where they exist.
2. Begin implementation of an integrated curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development framework that will assure continuous student progress within an aligned PreK-12 educational program.
3. Develop an action plan to improve school facilities with a focus on learning, safety, space, infrastructure and maintenance.
4. Review special education programs to ensure that every child's needs are met in accordance with the Individual Educational Program (IEP) and in compliance with state-mandated program requirements.
5. Protect the quality of the district's educational program while minimizing the financial impact on the local taxpayer, implementing greater fiscal efficiency and accountability, providing increased transparency and pursuing alternative funding.

Aligned to our district goals are our building level goals for 2008-2009:

1. By June 2009, 80% of 7th grade students will improve at least 5% on the Language Arts Assessment from Learnia Formative Assessments over their initial assessment in the beginning of the school year.
2. By June 2009, 80% of 7th grade students will improve at least 5% on the Mathematics Assessment from Learnia Formative Assessments over their initial assessment in the beginning of the school year.
3. Reduce by 3% to 5% the number of partially proficient students in any statistically significant subgroup that did not meet state AYP in 2007-2008.

As the only authorized International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) School in New Jersey, Rosa International Middle School began in 1999 with the vision of creating a rich culture for learning. The IBMYP framework supports our curriculum, instructional philosophy, school culture and commitment to character education.

Character education is fundamental to our existence. By immersing our school community in the culture of character, we have created an environment of support and collective efficacy. Collaboration and shared leadership shape and guide our daily behavior. Teachers meet regularly to plan lessons, discuss student needs and collaborate in a co-teaching model. Moreover, Rosa's staff is completely committed to self management and continuous professional development. Each tenured teacher engages in an action research plan focused on improving student achievement.

Every Rosa student and teacher participates in Community and Service Projects as well as Service Learning. Over the years, the efforts of Rosa's family of learners have raised thousands of dollars, helped scores of people and produced a culture of caring that fits perfectly with the International Baccalaureate Organization's theme of "Sharing Our Humanity."

That noble theme has inspired our entire school community to unite behind a singular cause half a world away, raising enough money to build a well that would bring clean water and, consequently, more learning to the Ugandan village of Kigo (pronounced Chee-go). As it turns out, a Rosa teacher working at the village school discovered that school attendance suffered greatly because students spent large amounts of time fetching water from a distant stream and then became sickened because the water was terribly polluted. Building a well for Kigo has become a school-wide cause and is illustrative of Rosa's commitment to character and the fundamental belief that by taking care of others, we best take care of ourselves.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

Students at Rosa International Middle School participate in the New Jersey state assessment system. The system of testing has varied through the years. Eighth grade students were administered the GEPA (Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment) until 2006 when it was renamed the NJASK. Sixth and seventh grades were not tested until the 2005 school year. In that year, the test was called the NJPASS and then renamed in 2006 to the NJASK. Important to note is the fact that in 2007, the Department of Education in New Jersey established a higher standard for proficiency for sixth and seventh grade. The higher standard caused a statewide reduction in test scores at both grades levels in Language Arts and Mathematics.

The mathematics portion of the test is administered in one day for eighth grade and two days for sixth and seventh grades. This section requires students to demonstrate proficiency in number sense, geometry, probability and problem-solving. On the reading portion, students are asked to read extended texts, answer multiple choice questions, and provide extended responses to open-ended questions. The writing section asks students to write to a picture and /or poetry prompts depending on the grade level.

Over the past five years scores for our eighth grade students have ranked in the top ten percent of all New Jersey Middle Schools. In 2007 – 2008 our scores improved to 99% proficient or advanced proficient in Language Arts Literacy. Sub-groups included Students with Disabilities (100% passing/11% advanced), Black (100%passing/9%advanced), and Hispanic (100% passing/13% advanced and Economically-Disadvantaged (91% passing/5% advanced). These scores represent rank Rosa International Middle School in the top 3% (ranked #18) of all schools (695 schools) reporting in New Jersey.

In 2007 – 2008 the eighth grade math scores stood at 95% proficient or advanced proficient. Sub-groups included Students with Disabilities (90%passing/16% advanced, Black (91% passing/47% advanced, Hispanic (88%passing/50% proficient) and Economically Disadvantaged (91%passing/33% advanced).

Testing began in 2006 for sixth and seventh grade students. In that brief period of time the test has undergone significant changes. The original test, the NJPASS, was administered in 2006 and was replaced in 2007 with the NJASK assessment. As stated earlier, the NJASK was then adjusted to a higher standard. As one can see the data is not as consistent at either grade level with a marked drop in the 2008 scores in both math and language arts. The standard change was moved from thirty-three percent of the items correct for proficiency to fifty percent correct for a passing grade. Despite these changes Rosa students continued to rank in the top ten to fifteen percent of all schools reporting in the state.

Additional information on the NJ assessment system may be found on [www.state.nj.us](http://www.state.nj.us).

### 2. Using Assessment Results:

Teachers at Rosa International Middle School rely on assessment data to differentiate instruction, guide flexible grouping, and inform colleague discussion on instructional design. Working collaboratively, our teachers have formulated essential agreements for assessment. These practices occur in developmentally appropriate ways across all subjects and grade levels. They include:

1. Common formative and summative assessments in math and science.
2. Creation of coaching rubrics to guide student performance tasks.
3. Utilization of IB/MYP rubrics to assess student learning.



4. Utilization of student portfolios to track learning across all disciplines for three years. A minimum of three IB/MYP scored pieces are required for each grade level.
5. A data base showing tracking of the standardized test results for each student beginning in third grade to present is kept on record to show progress over time.
6. Reassessment opportunities for all students who: 1. do not meet the standard or 2. wanting to exceed the standards, are established for both formative and summative assessments.
7. Intervention strategies are developed in both math and language arts based on multiple data points. Intervention strategies are developed for both students looking to meet or exceed the standards.

In addition, teachers meet on a weekly basis to discuss student progress. Weekly meetings with our Middle Year's Program supervisor focus on instructional pedagogy and the IB/MYP philosophy. A second meeting, facilitated by the guidance counselor focuses on student support and strategies to assist all students from the neediest to the highest achiever. Another weekly meeting, facilitated by the In-Class Support/Special Education Teacher, discusses the needs of our classified population. These meetings allow our Special Education teachers to engage our regular education teachers in professional development, accommodations and modifications for special needs students.

A comprehensive report is submitted by each learning community of teachers on a monthly basis. These reports allow us to monitor the work of our teachers efforts specific to influencing and promoting student learning. Any activity related to professional development, instructional planning, interdisciplinary connections and student progress is reported each month. Highlights of each report are shared among the faculty.

All tenured teachers participate in a "Collaborative Plan." The plan is an action research project focused on instructional practices and student learning. The teachers may choose to participate as individuals or in small groups. The action research plan must be focused on an identified students within the teacher's learning community and approved, collaboratively, with the school administration. Teachers meet bi-monthly with their supervisors to report on their progress. Ultimately all faculty members share their work with the entire staff. A final report/reflection is required for each action research plan at the end of each school year.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Assessment data is communicated to all members of our learning community. In addition to NJ state assessment data results, which are posted in the school hallways, student work is displayed throughout the school. Coaching and assessment rubrics are placed alongside the authentic work thus communicating clearly the required standards. A once a year parent conference is held to communicate to parents and students the needs for the student. At that time, parent, student and teacher develop an improvement plan to facilitate achievement, communicate results and define each person's role in promoting the student's success.

Report cards are issued at nine week intervals for all grade levels. These report cards include Math, Science, Language Arts, Humanities, World Language, Art, Music, Technology and Health and Physical Education grades. At the mid-point of each marking period an interim report is sent home communicating student progress up to that point. Each teacher utilizes an E-Board to communicate expectations, past assessments, future assignments and any materials the student may need to complete expectations., post reminders about assessments and provide materials students may need to complete assignments and meet/exceed expectations. These E-Boards are updated on a daily.

During the first marking period of sixth grade the students begin a portfolio of exemplars in all subjects. Each exemplar is assessed with an IB/MYP rubric. A minimum of three exemplars must be submitted for each subject. This portfolio follows the student for their three years at Rosa International Middle School. The portfolios are shared by students with parents on a regular basis. They are maintained throughout the year.

School results are published on the state department website, in local newspapers and, finally, in our PTA newsletter. One Board of Education meeting per year is dedicated to an analysis of the state assessment performance for our district schools.

#### **4. Sharing Success:**

Rosa International Middle School is privileged to be the only authorized International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program in New Jersey. As a Blue Ribbon School we would be even more committed to hosting visitors wishing to research and examine any of our practices. In addition to the IB/MYP philosophy, Rosa is honored to be a 2008 recipient of the National School of Character Award. Our commitment to Character Education and the Middle Years Philosophy is proudly celebrated by our entire school community. Building level administrators along with acknowledged instructional specialists have visited other schools to assist in their development of differentiated instruction in all subject areas.

Rosa, as a member of the International Baccalaureate Organization, is committed to sharing our success with others. Our recent Character Education Award demands the same commitment for sharing. The model is in place for faculty members to demonstrate successful lessons at other school sites, and complete willingness, to host visiting teachers during class sessions or in-services.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

The curriculum and instruction at Rosa International Middle School are aligned with New Jersey State Core Standards and rooted in a developmental approach to education. Teachers at Rosa share a vision that incorporates Best Practices in the Middle School (advisory, heterogeneous grouping and developmentally appropriate lessons), the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) and a multi-faceted educational philosophy that permeates all pedagogy. This philosophy, evident throughout the curriculum and in all instruction, is that education cannot be based solely on cognitive factors but must consider psychological, social, emotional and physical factors as well.

Central to Rosa's curriculum and instruction is the IBMYP, which is anchored by three cornerstones: Holistic Education, Communication and Intercultural Awareness. This program is a perfect fit for the 21st Century, when the most successful will be those educated holistically with the ability to communicate and work with people from all cultures and backgrounds.

Juxtaposed with the three cornerstones are the IB (International Baccalaureate) Areas of Interaction, five segments that drive all learning at Rosa: Approaches to Learning, Health and Social Education, Human Ingenuity, Environments and Community and Service. This is the backbone of an IB education: learning how to learn, being aware and respectful of others; tapping individual strengths to produce innovation; taking into account physical, social and psychological environments and accepting the importance of maintaining a community through service. The Areas of Interaction provide a common language for Rosa students and enable seamless connections throughout content areas. A Rosa student is an IB learner who balances learning, takes risks and makes inquiries about the material being taught with the goal of extending his/her knowledge for the sake of community, country and world.

Rosa follows a full inclusion philosophy of education. Each learning community has students who vary in learning styles and needs. A special education teacher is a part of each learning community and provides support to the core teachers via co-teaching and differentiated instruction.

Teachers meet on a daily basis with the special education teacher to make modifications where necessary and to design lessons that will reach all learners. By employing a team approach, teachers can easily enhance subject material and incorporate interdisciplinary lessons across content areas.

Unique to Rosa is the CAPSS (Communication and Pragmatics and Social Skills) program, which gives support to students with Asperger's Syndrome. Each grade level has one learning community with a group of CAPSS students. All the teachers on the learning community with CAPSS students receive special training in the language of pragmatics. This language includes a common vocabulary that helps all students develop social skills, but is particularly helpful for learners on the autistic spectrum who have greater difficulty with social thinking, cues and actions.

The CAPSS program has helped Asperger's Syndrome students blend into the Rosa community. For example, a CAPSS student is a columnist on the school newspaper, an activity that has helped him improve his patience and ability to transition. Another CAPSS student is a member of the Jazz Band, an elite ensemble that requires an audition and is highly selective. Several CAPSS students are members of the Chess Club, which recently placed first in a competition involving many local schools.

## **2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:**

This question is for elementary schools only

## **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

The Language Arts curriculum at Rosa International Middle School is supported through reading and writing workshops. This curriculum is taught not by isolating skills, but by integrating reading and writing strategies developed in the workshops. The program breaks the confines of traditional grammar instruction by teaching it in the context of books and writing.

Reading workshop concentrates on specific active reading strategies to foster -through the use of many different media - higher order thinking as well as measurable gains in comprehension and the ability to evaluate information. At Rosa, Language Arts teachers work to build upon skills introduced in the elementary grades. For example, the literature circles at the elementary level segue into more sophisticated book clubs in middle school as teachers encourage a shift to a student-directed approach.

Through the efforts of Rosa's library/media specialist and the assistant principal in charge of Language Arts, each grade level has its own extensive, age-appropriate "rolling" library book cart full of critically acclaimed titles. Multiple copies of books representing different genres afford students the overwhelming likelihood of choosing something they really want to read. Both the standardized assessment scores earned by Rosa students as well as common sense support that high interest in the material being read results in closer reading, deeper reading and, most importantly, enjoyable reading.

The book club's cooperative group approach to teaching a novel maximizes student involvement. Leadership opportunities are afforded to every student at each grade level. Book clubs create small learning communities where students deconstruct a text in an atmosphere far less intimidating than whole-class discussion. The book club supports Rosa students in their pursuit to think more critically and at a higher level. The small group environment demands participation and increases a student's proficiency in making the text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world connections that mark interpretive reading and higher level thinking.

Significant writing is required at all grade levels at Rosa International Middle School. Writing workshop encourages the Rosa learner to communicate his/her understanding by developing a repertoire of skills and strategies through the exploration of non-fiction and fiction writing. Students discover their own voices and styles through the study of everyday text. Looking at contemporary writers as models, students are able to sharpen their own writing skills. This enables them to create portfolios that demonstrate their growth as writers. A student's ability to produce memoirs, features, editorials, essays, short stories, poetry and open-ended responses are all improved by writing workshops.

Additionally, as IB students, Rosa learners in each grade level must complete a long-term research assignment called the Information Literacy Project (ILP). Students are challenged to investigate a self-selected topic in depth. Reflective writing about the research process and an oral presentation are ILP requirements for all grade levels.

In sixth grade, the writing product is informational and is preceded by students learning the research process. Sixth grade ILP projects have included the sport of BMX (bicycle motocross racing on earthen tracks), nutrition and the history of dolls. In seventh grade, students apply their learning and tap their Human Ingenuity, one of the IB Areas of Interaction, to produce something “hands on.” Learning and doing are hallmarks of the seventh grade ILP. Past projects have included demonstrations in fencing and flower arranging and creations for real use such as travel itineraries and comprehensive nutrition/diet programs. In eighth grade, the ILP is a comprehensive persuasive research paper. Students must explore all facets of a topic, choose a side and argue its validity based on extensive research. At Rosa, the ILP curriculum is representative of the school’s commitment to promote inquiry and reflection. At each grade level, students come to understand that the journey of doing the ILP work is as important as the end product.

### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

Humanities instruction at Rosa International Middle School aims to prepare Rosa students to be responsible citizens, both locally and globally. The instruction by Rosa’s Humanities teachers is driven by NJ state standards designed to produce students who are researchers, inquirers and thinkers. Infused within the Humanities content standards are economic, cultural, anthropological, sociological and global perspectives. Using Smartboards, laptops, the Socratic Method as well as conventional text, Rosa Humanities teachers are united in their efforts to teach not only what happened, but to instill in students a desire to ask why and how the past is relevant to them as 21st Century citizens.

In sixth and seventh grades, the Humanities curriculum allows students to figuratively travel the globe and explore ancient civilizations and empires, with a strong focus on the culture of the people being studied. The eighth grade curriculum concentrates on bringing American History to life by making applications to contemporary life. For example, to underscore how bickering and pettiness made writing the Constitution tedious and tenuous, students in several Humanities classes were required to divide into groups ostensibly to create an edible sandwich. Many students reported a deeper appreciation for what our founders had to overcome to produce the doctrine that endures to this day. Additionally, many eighth grade Humanities students spend lunches and many evenings and weekends as part of a National History Day Club led by one of Rosa’s teacher-historians. Last year, several of the Rosa projects, which included films, PowerPoints, plays and papers, not only won National History Day competitions on the local, state and regional levels, but two groups advanced to the highly competitive and elite finals in Washington, D.C. This year, Rosa students are hard at work again, joined by many alumni who have come back from high school to engage in the rigorous research and preparation demanded by the competition.

Mathematics instruction at Rosa International Middle School blends traditional methods with innovation. Smartboards and computer tutorials that allow a student to work at his/her own pace coexist with textbooks and tried-and-true classroom instruction. An example of the infusion of technology into math that occurred recently involved Google, a computer and a projection screen. To make learning about measuring distances more than a yawn for techno-savvy students, one math teacher used the popular Google search engine. Clicking onto Google Earth, the teacher first showed the globe. After a series of clicks zoomed Rosa and its surrounding neighborhoods into view, the teacher guided students in measuring distances, including the circumference of the school grounds. The students also picked out geometric shapes and figures. Like Humanities through the National History Day Club, Mathematics at Rosa is enriched through student participation in MathCounts, which meets after school and prepares for math competitions against other schools. Under the guidance of a Rosa Math teacher, MathCounts members have been extremely successful over the past several years, winning competitions at the regional and state levels.

Rosa math teachers use data collected over time to measure the progress of each and every student. This approach allows math teachers to identify strengths and deficiencies to ensure that the cumulative progress indicators set by the state are met or exceeded. The efficacy of this approach is proven by standardized test results for Rosa students in Mathematics. At Rosa, math instruction is not limited to classroom time. Not only does Rosa have a general homework club that meets daily, a special math-only version overseen by a math teacher is run simultaneously twice weekly.

All Rosa math teachers provide extensive before and after school help. Morning math help is particularly popular. On any given day, more than 50 students may be found in the library media center assembled in groups receiving additional instruction from their math teachers. Through their many hours of volunteered time, Rosa's math teachers model Community and Service, one of the five Areas of Interaction that is infused throughout the school's curricula.

Rosa's science curriculum is inquiry-based and designed to have students accept their roles in creating a healthy world. Hands-on learning is emphasized to enable real life connections. For example, eighth grade students hone their inquiry-based skills through a start-of-term lab that requires the creation of a procedure to measure the absorbency of different brands of paper towels. Motion and forces are studied in 8th grade science through the creation of model roller coasters the students must prove could work. In sixth grade science class, cell structure is studied by the students' creation of cells that must show all the parts. The pinnacle of the sixth grade science year is the five-day camping trip to the New Jersey Pinelands, which is hands-on learning, extreme edition. Freed from the confines of the classroom with nary a traditional textbook in sight, Rosa students experience lessons requiring them to observe and study the nature around them. Teachers create lessons and activities that explore concepts in disciplines that include biology, horticulture, geology and physics. All week long, students roll up their sleeves and spend many hours happily learning concepts that may have bored them to tears in a traditional classroom setting. During their Pinelands experience, Rosa learners hypothesize, synthesize and analyze their learning while physically present in an environment that will be theirs to preserve and protect in the future.

#### Cross Curricular Connections and Additional Curricula

Rosa International Middle School employs the octagon of holistic education, which means that each discipline supports and enhances all the others. Under this model, World Language, Technology, Physical Education, Art and Music are as important as any other subject. As a result, Rosa learners comfortably and frequently make cross-curricular connections. Recently, one eighth grade learning community – what a team is called at Rosa - married the study of the presidential election in Humanities with the study of persuasion in Language Arts. Extensive research of issues in Humanities class paralleled the study of persuasive writing, speaking and speech delivery in Language Arts class. The result was that each of the learning community's 92 students delivered an issues-laden speech before a combined Humanities/Language Arts class. Virtually all NJ state standards for Humanities and Language Arts were met through this interdisciplinary study.

In physical education class, technology was used to monitor heart rates. In a science class, mathematics was used to study velocity through an activity that measured the speed of cars on the road outside the school. In an art class, a series of lessons about patterns and spatial sense was connected to geometry. Cross curricular connections are made constantly and naturally as they are a fundamental approach to learning at Rosa.

Rosa International Middle School, especially because of its IB connection, emphasizes learning about other cultures. Each Rosa student is required to study either Spanish or French, to learn not only the language but how it evolved and where it is used throughout the world. Teachers design lessons that while fun, promote fluency. For example, one group of 8th grade Spanish and French students learned common phrases by writing and practicing telephone dialogue. Another group of Language B (what World Language is called at Rosa) students presented a fashion show with commentary in their foreign tongue. Another group of students created persuasive posters in their target language that promoted the benefits of being environmentally

conscious. Emphasizing intercultural awareness and global citizenship are keys of Language B instruction at Rosa.

Rounding out the school day for Rosa students are the Special Area Classes: Physical Education, Technology, Art and Music. At Rosa International Middle School, these classes are considered an integral part of each student's education and another manifestation of students' experiences with the Areas of Interaction, which deepen learning and awareness. Cross curricular connections with academic subjects and close cooperation with subject teachers are abundant and encouraged by Rosa's administrative team.

For example, Physical Education supports the notion of Health and Social Education by incorporating mental and physical well being in the health curriculum. Students study about nutrition, suicide prevention and responsible decision making, learning how to handle their adolescent problems of today and tomorrow. Community and Service is the Area of Interaction that is especially in play in this department. Through their physical education classes, Rosa students every spring participate in Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart. Organized by one of Rosa's physical education teachers, these activities satisfy NJ state health and physical education curriculum standards and have allowed students to raise nearly \$100,000 over the past nine years.

In music classes, students use technology to compose original works. In art classes, students learn theory and practice and produce pieces that make cross curricular connections. In technology classes, students learn skills that enable the easy application of programs to produce PowerPoint presentations, short films and Excel spreadsheets. Again, the Areas of Interaction are ever present. For example, the technology teacher aided an 8th grade student with his Community and Service project by creating a portal that was used by the entire school to log the amount of rice that was "earned" by correctly answering trivia questions on a popular website whose objective is to help feed the world's hungry.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

##### **Special Areas: Advisory and the Community of Caring**

At Rosa International Middle School, all the content areas are supported by the Advisory Program known as Transformation and Discovery (T&D). Students start each day in their T&D Advisory groups, which consist of 12-15 students and one teacher/advisor.

During T & D, students are taught to become advocates for their learning, an important skill particularly in eighth grade where the impending prospect of high school looms. High school teachers and administrators have reported that Rosa students demonstrate a great deal of independence in high school. Rosa faculty members believe Advisory promotes self-reliance and may contribute to high monthly school attendance rates.

The advisor is the communication link between home and school. Particular attention is paid to each student's academic, social and personal well-being. The advisor is the catalyst for developing a culture categorized by warmth, concern, openness and understanding. Advisory lessons deal with themes such as establishing classroom agreements, replacing put-downs with build-ups, managing emotions and setting positive goals. Life skills are explored through the Lion's Quest program, adopted several years ago by the school district as part of a character education initiative, and Rosa's own Community of Caring initiative.

Rosa is especially proud of its commitment to character education. Since its founding 10 years ago, Rosa's vision has included a strong focus on the character and social development of each student, in addition to fostering individual academic growth and achievement. A Character Education Committee comprised of teachers, parents and administrators has existed for many years. Two years ago, Rosa was chosen to be part of the Caring School Inclusion Project (CSIP), a national grant awarded to the New Jersey Department of

Education and the New Jersey Center for Character Education. The mission of CSIP is to use full inclusion model schools such as Rosa to study whether a strong character education initiative affects the academic achievement of students with special needs. CSIP uses the Community of Caring Program, an evidence-based character education intervention, which focuses on creating a school culture that provides opportunities for all students. As a result of moving to this model, Rosa has witnessed the infusion of character education throughout the curricula and all school activities. This mirrors the profound effect of the IB Areas of Interaction on Rosa's curricula.

The fusion of character education into Rosa's culture made the school's selection as a New Jersey School of Character in 2007 and 2008 a source of particular pride, equaled only by the school's selection in 2008 as a National School of Character. Rosa is only one of 10 schools in the nation to receive this award and the only middle school. At Rosa International Middle School, education is vital but character is essential.

## **5. Professional Development:**

At Rosa International Middle School, professional development is seamlessly interwoven into each school day throughout the school year. In addition to in-services hosted by the district, Rosa's teachers receive a daily planning period to support professional development and collaboration.

Both the district in-services and Rosa's daily and weekly professional development time support teachers in becoming lifelong learners. This year, on the district level, after-school workshops were offered to teachers on a wide variety of topics including differentiated instruction, Smartboard technology and classroom literacy. Teachers had the option of choosing a three-session workshop totaling six hours and foregoing a scheduled district-wide in-service day. Many Rosa teachers chose this alternative.

At Rosa, professional development is happening all the time. Each learning community at Rosa has a core team of teachers in these disciplines: Language Arts, Humanities, Language B (World Language) and Science. The common meeting time enabled by the team model results in formal and informal professional development. A unique professional development piece promulgated by the school principal requires the Special Education teacher on each team to provide weekly instruction focusing on differentiated instruction to his/her colleagues during one of the common planning periods.

During the week, teams of teachers meet regularly with different administrators and staff members. These meetings always have a professional development component that might include, as happened recently, training led by other Rosa teachers on the use of the district's new electronic grading book, or instruction in a new approach on using data to drive instruction. Among the professionals with whom Rosa teaching teams meet several times weekly include both assistant principals, one of whom is the school's IB coordinator, the school counselor assigned to the team's learning community and members of the child-study team.

Portions of faculty meetings also have been used for professional development. For example, at two recent faculty meetings, Rosa staff devoted time to Community of Caring initiatives. Department meetings often include a professional development component as well. The Language Arts Department, overseen by the assistant principal who is a reading specialist, read and shared a professional book about treating assessment as a genre.

This unique style of weekly professional development empowers teachers to take educational research into their own hands. For example, tenured teachers at Rosa have the option to work on collaborative plans instead of submitting to administrative observations. Although collaborative plans are time-consuming, 90 percent of Rosa's tenured faculty members have chosen the option and have completed research action plans on topics such as multi-cultural education, gender-biased classrooms, differentiated instruction, technology integration and goal setting. Such exploration allows teachers to turn their research into data-driven instruction that tailors teaching to the specific needs of learners.



## **6. School Leadership:**

The management style at Rosa International Middle School encompasses shared vision, shared leadership and shared responsibility. Administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and community members all collaborate to create meaningful connections in the school and curriculum. Within their learning communities, teachers have flexibility and autonomy in their schedules, which allows the welfare of the learner to be paramount. Flexibility also allows teachers to meet the individual needs of their classes instead of treating them exactly the same.

Open communication between the administration and faculty is encouraged and supported through weekly meetings. The principal and assistant principals, as well as the school psychologist and counselors, meet weekly with teachers to discuss the changes necessary to create lifelong learners. Teachers meet with the counselor assigned to their learning community to discuss methods to aid students at risk. During these meetings, individual programs are designed to allow each learner to receive the support he/she needs to be successful.

At the first faculty meeting of the year, the school principal reaffirmed his commitment to open communication as a way to promote collegiality, integrity and smooth sailing. "Let's all pledge to acknowledge the elephant in the room," he said. The principal's comment affirms respectful communication as a vehicle to avoid or minimize conflicts and endorses the culture of shared leadership he has established at the school.



## PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: NJASK

Edition/Publication Year: 2007

Publisher: State of New Jersey

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Mar	Apr		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	91	95	94		
Advanced	38	36	36		
Number of students tested	234	239	296		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	85	83	90		
Advanced	20	39	16		
Number of students tested	20	18	19		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	94	97	93		
Advanced	37	32	34		
Number of students tested	160	173	229		
<b>3. (specify subgroup): Black</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	71	75	93		
Advanced	12	25	0		
Number of students tested	17	16	14		
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Asian</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	95	100	98		
Advanced	48	60	61		
Number of students tested	42	33	44		

Notes:

Please note: New Jersey did not begin testing 6th grade students until th 2005 - 2006 school year.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: NJASK

Edition/Publication Year: 2007

Publisher: State of New Jersey

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Mar	Apr		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	79	95	96		
Advanced	7	25	26		
Number of students tested	233	239	298		
Percent of total students tested	99	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	60	83	90		
Advanced	5	33	5		
Number of students tested	20	18	19		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	82	96	96		
Advanced	8	24	24		
Number of students tested	159	173	231		
<b>3. (specify subgroup): Black</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	53	81	100		
Advanced	6	25	6		
Number of students tested	17	16	14		
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Asian</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	81	97	98		
Advanced	10	38	46		
Number of students tested	42	37	44		

Notes:

New Jersey did not begin testing 6th grade students until the 2005 school year. The state also changed the standards for proficiency in 2007 - 2008 resulting in lower scores throughout the state.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7

Test: NJASK

Edition/Publication Year: 2007

Publisher: State of New Jersey

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Mar	Apr		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	87	91	93		
Advanced	46	38	28		
Number of students tested	238	285	247		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	58	72	85		
Advanced	37	17	8		
Number of students tested	19	18	13		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	87	92	92		
Advanced	41	37	29		
Number of students tested	178	222	205		
<b>3. (specify subgroup): Black</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	58	69	85		
Advanced	33	0	8		
Number of students tested	12	13	13		
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Asian</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	94	98	100		
advanced proficient	69	68	33		
Number of students tested	35	40	24		

Notes:

New jersey did not begin testing seventh grade students until 2005 - 2006 school year. The standard for proficiency was changed in 2007 - 2008 resulting in lower test scores.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7

Test: NJASK

Edition/Publication Year: 2007

Publisher: State of New Jersey

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Mar	Apr		
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	89	99	96		
Advanced	29	25	16		
Number of students tested	238	285	248		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	68	100	86		
Advanced	16	22	7		
Number of students tested	14	18	19		
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	89	100	97		
Advanced	29	24	18		
Number of students tested	178	222	206		
<b>3. (specify subgroup): Black</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	75	100	92		
Advanced	17	8	8		
Number of students tested	12	13	13		
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Asian</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	94	100	96		
Advanced	40	45	13		
Number of students tested	35	40	24		

Notes:

New Jersey did not begin testing 7th grade students until 2005 - 2006 school year. The state changed the standard for proficiency in 2007 - 2008 resulting in lower test scores across the state.

Subject: Mathematics  
Edition/Publication Year: 2006

Grade: 8      Test: GEPA/NJASK  
Publisher: State of New Jersey

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Mar	Apr	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	95	93	92	91	86
Advanced	49	39	46	45	37
Number of students tested	280	240	250	287	236
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	91	91	94	100	64
Advanced	33	18	38	36	46
Number of students tested	21	11	16	11	11
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	95	93	92	93	86
Advanced	47	40	44	44	34
Number of students tested	220	199	201	232	190
<b>3. (specify subgroup): Black</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	91	93	67	60	50
Advanced	0	21	11	10	17
Number of students tested	11	14	9	10	12
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Asian</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	97	91	97	93	100
Advanced	74	39	64	68	61
Number of students tested	38	23	36	40	31

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: GEPA/NJASK

Edition/Publication Year: 2006

Publisher: State of New Jersey

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Mar	Apr	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	99	92	96	90	95
Advanced	30	23	29	14	9
Number of students tested	280	238	249	287	233
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	91	91	88	91	100
Advanced	5	0	19	9	9
Number of students tested	21	11	16	11	11
<b>2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): White</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	98	92	95	91	95
Advanced	29	23	26	14	8
Number of students tested	220	197	200	232	187
<b>3. (specify subgroup): Black</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	100	93	89	80	92
Advanced	9	29	11	10	0
Number of students tested	11	14	9	10	12
<b>4. (specify subgroup): Asian</b>					
Advanced Plus Proficient	100	91	100	90	100
Advanced	47	22	50	18	16
Number of students tested	38	23	36	40	31

Notes:

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